

Opera and the Natural World

Opera History And Naturalism · Answer Key · 20 Questions

1. Which bird species is famously represented by a virtuosic flute motif in the Queen of the Night's aria 'Der Hölle Rache' from Mozart's 'The Magic Flute'?

- A) Nightingale
- B) Cockatoo
- C) Starling**
- D) Canary

2. In Wagner's 'Der Ring des Nibelungen', the character Fafner transforms into what specific animal to guard the Rhinegold?

- A) Dragon**
- B) Bear
- C) Wolf
- D) Serpent

3. Which opera features a prominent 'Forest Murmurs' sequence, depicting the sounds of a woodland environment through intricate orchestral polyphony?

- A) Siegfried**
- B) Tosca
- C) Carmen
- D) Aida

4. The libretto of Leos Janáček's 'The Cunning Little Vixen' is based on the serialized drawings and stories of which forest animal?

- A) Fox**
- B) Badger
- C) Hare
- D) Weasel

5. In the final act of Puccini's 'Madama Butterfly', which insect is metaphorically referenced in the aria 'Un bel dì, vedremo' to symbolize fleeting hope?

- A) Butterfly
- B) Cicada**
- C) Firefly
- D) Dragonfly

6. Which opera includes a famous 'Flower Duet', set in a lush garden populated by jasmine and roses?

A) Lakmé

- B) Lucia di Lammermoor
- C) Don Giovanni
- D) Norma

7. In Rossini's 'La gazza ladra' (The Thieving Magpie), what specific bird species plays a central role in the plot as the thief?

A) Common Magpie

- B) Common Raven
- C) Carrion Crow
- D) Blue Jay

8. Which composer wrote 'The Birds' (Gli Uccelli), a suite often utilized in operatic and ballet productions, imitating the calls of various avian species?

A) Ottorino Respighi

- B) Giuseppe Verdi
- C) Gaetano Donizetti
- D) Vincenzo Bellini

9. In many traditional stagings of Humperdinck's 'Hänsel und Gretel', which animal helps lead the lost children through the dark forest?

A) Cuckoo

- B) Owl
- C) Deer
- D) Fox

10. Which opera set in the American West features a 'Polka' dance scene where the characters are preoccupied with the impending winter snowstorm?

A) La fanciulla del West

- B) The Ballad of Baby Doe
- C) Susannah
- D) Vanessa

11. In the opera 'The Love for Three Oranges' by Prokofiev, the character Prince Tartaglia suffers from a chronic illness that is cured by the sight of what natural element?

A) Ocean waves

- B) Volcanic ash
- C) Spring flowers
- D) Desert sand

12. Which opera by Benjamin Britten is set in a coastal environment where the sea acts as a primary antagonist to the protagonist, Peter Grimes?

A) Peter Grimes

- B) Billy Budd
- C) The Turn of the Screw
- D) Albert Herring

13. The plot of 'Der Freischütz' involves the forging of 'magic bullets' in a location known as the 'Wolf's Glen', which is characterized by what type of biome?

A) Dark Ravine

- B) Alpine Glacier
- C) Coastal Marsh
- D) Tropical Jungle

14. Which opera features a chorus of insects and animals in a dream sequence, notably including a scene with a mosquito and a dung beetle?

A) The Cunning Little Vixen

- B) The Bartered Bride
- C) Rusalka
- D) Boris Godunov

15. In Dvorák's 'Rusalka', the titular character is a water spirit who longs to become human; to which class of vertebrate do the creatures she interacts with in the lake belong?

A) Amphibians

- B) Reptiles
- C) Mammals
- D) Fish

16. What environmental disaster is alluded to in the staging of some contemporary productions of Verdi's 'La Traviata' to symbolize the corruption of nature?

A) Industrial Pollution

- B) Deforestation
- C) Drought
- D) Desertification

17. Which opera's overture is famously noted for its depiction of a thunderstorm, mirroring the environmental tension of the setting?

A) William Tell

- B) Il Trovatore
- C) Falstaff
- D) Macbeth

18. In the context of 'The Magic Flute', the character Papageno is a 'bird-catcher' who wears a costume adorned with feathers of which type?

- A) Parrots
- B) Pheasants**
- C) Ostriches
- D) Peacocks

19. Which opera, set in a tropical island environment, features a storm that sets the entire narrative in motion?

- A) The Tempest**
- B) Tristan und Isolde
- C) Parsifal
- D) Lohengrin

20. In 'Elektra', the protagonist compares herself to what scavenging bird of prey while awaiting revenge?

- A) Vulture**
- B) Hawk
- C) Falcon
- D) Eagle